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ABSTRACT

This document presents and examines Iowa's adult basic education (ABE) program benchmarks, which have been designed as criteria for evaluating the following aspects of the performance of ABE programs in Iowa's community colleges: educational gains; program planning; curriculum/instruction; staff development; support services; and recruitment/retention. The introduction provides an overview of Iowa's efforts in the area of ABE program accountability and the legislative mandates for benchmarks for ABE. Key terms related to benchmarks/accountability are defined. Discussed next are the following: characteristics of benchmarks; considerations in developing a statewide accountability system; Iowa's Literacy/ABE Vision 2005; the Iowa context of ABE; and the Iowa ABE benchmarks' underlying philosophy, development, and utilization. Next, the actual benchmarks are presented. The following information is provided for each benchmark: title and number, number of the applicable performance standard; extent to which it had been implemented as of 1995 and is to be implemented by 2000 and 2005; explanation; rationale; and source. The bibliography lists 32 references. Appended are a chronological listing of continuing education/ABE/General Educational Development program accountability studies and benchmark data sources published in 1982-1996 and listing of focus areas, indicators of program growth, performance measures, and performance standards. (MN)

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BENCHMARKS FOR ADULT BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN IOWA'S COMMUNITY COLLEGES

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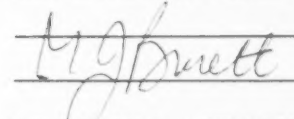
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PREPARED BY

IOWA'S COMMUNITY COLLEGE
ADULT BASIC EDUCATION COORDINATORS

MARCH 1996

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PREFACE

For more than 30 years (1965-1996), the Adult Education Act has supported states' efforts to provide lifelong learning opportunities for educationally disadvantaged adults. Adult basic education (ABE), adult secondary education (ASE), and English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) programs have allowed adult learners to reach their full potential as parents, workers, and citizens of their communities.

The National Literacy Act of 1991 renewed the federal commitment to adult education. Foremost among its priorities is the improvement of programs to ensure that educational services supported with federal funds are quality services. To this end, the National Literacy Act called for the development of indicators of program quality by the Secretary of Education that could be used by states and local programs as models by which to judge the effectiveness of their services.

The performance indicators fulfill that mandate. They were developed through a comprehensive process that included the participation of adult education administrators and practitioners, adult learners, researchers, and other experts in the field. They have taken into account the different conditions under which the broad array of local programs operate. Both the indicators themselves, and the process by which they were developed, guided Iowa's adult basic education coordinators as they developed and refined Iowa's quality indicators to meet the requirements of the National Literacy Act.

The next step was the development of benchmarks based on established performance standards. The establishment of benchmarks provides program outcome measures that Iowa's adult basic education program will utilize at the local and state level to assess its progress toward specific program goals through the year 2005.

As a new century approaches, Americans will need higher levels of literacy than ever before. The National Literacy Act challenges all of us involved in adult basic education and literacy to make certain that this need is met. The benchmarks represent a second critical step in Iowa's efforts to define and promote quality in programs that serve as the foundation for ensuring the successful achievement of national educational goal number six which states "by the year 2000, every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a national global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship."

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The statewide **benchmarks project** was completed through the cooperation, guidance, interest and assistance of many individuals who devoted their time, energy, and expertise in all phases of the project. The writer expresses appreciation to the individuals and groups who participated and assisted in making the project a successful reality.

Appreciation is extended to **Iowa's community colleges adult basic education coordinators** who provided the input that the benchmark committee used in the formulation phase of the project. The project could not have been completed without their time commitment, dedication and expertise.

A special note of appreciation is extended to **Becky Erickson**, graphic artist, for entry of the original draft and to **Sharon Willis**, graphic artist, for the cover design.

A special and sincere thank you is extended to the **adult basic education benchmark committee**. The benchmark committee provided overall direction for the project. They assisted in the synthesizing, summarization and consolidation of input from the adult basic education coordinators. The following is a listing of the focus areas and committee members:

FOCUS AREA	COMMITTEE MEMBERS
1.0 Educational Gains	John Hartwig , Iowa Department of Education, Des Moines Laura Schinnow , Iowa Valley Community College Dist., Marshalltown Mary Entz , Des Moines Area Community College, Des Moines
2.0 Program Planning	Kuy Nebergall , Kirkwood Community College, Cedar Rapids Marty Lundberg , North Iowa Area Community College, Mason City Lynn Rolfsmeier , Northwest Iowa Community College, Sheldon
3.0 Curriculum/Instruction	Mary Strom , Northeast Iowa Community College, Calmar Linda Rater , Hawkeye Community College, Fort Dodge Chris Case , Western Iowa Tech Community College, Sioux City
4.0 Staff Development	Jane Hobart , Iowa Central Community College, Fort Dodge Miriam Temple , Iowa Dept. of Education, Des Moines Jim Schneider , Eastern Iowa Community College District, Davenport
5.0 Support Services	Donald L. Wederquist , Iowa Department of Education, Des Moines Jane Hobart , Iowa Central Community College, Fort Dodge Jim Schneider , Eastern Iowa Community College District, Davenport
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INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to present Iowa's adult basic education program benchmarks which have been developed to: (1) establish adult basic education program outcomes through the year 2005 in relation to the vision and strategic plan, (2) provide quantifiable indicators to measure progress toward program outcomes, and (3) build on Iowa's adult basic education program accountability.

OVERVIEW

The proposed federal legislation, concerning adult basic education block grants, contains language relative to the concept of program benchmarks and standards as one of the criteria for the administration of basic skills education programs. The Iowa adult basic education (ABE) program has always been proactive and visionary; therefore, the benchmark project is another example of that vision and proactiveness. The adult basic education coordinators made the decision to implement the benchmarking project at the 1995 ABE coordinator's retreat.

The committee members, that originally assisted in developing the adult basic education standards in May 1993, were appointed to the same focus area committees to develop the benchmarks.¹ The Oregon process for developing benchmarks was utilized for Iowa's ABE program benchmarks (*Oregon Progress Board*, 1994b).

The target year of 1995 was chosen as the historical framework for each benchmark with appropriate projections, either in terms of percentages or real numbers, being made for target years 2000 and 2005. Each committee also identified which benchmarks they considered to be core benchmarks.

BACKGROUND

The Adult Education Act (AEA) establishes the federal role in supporting the provision of basic skills instruction to educationally disadvantaged adults. The Act authorizes the U.S. Department of Education to provide basic grants to states that support local instruction to adults in adult basic education (ABE), adult secondary education (ASE), and English-as-a-second-language (ESL) programs. The Act also promotes quality in state and local programs through requirements for program evaluation. The most recent amendments to the Act, embodied in the National Literacy Act (NLA) of 1991, highlight the importance of program quality by requiring that

Within one year after the enactment of the National Literacy Act of 1991, the Secretary, in consultation with appropriate experts, educators and administrators, shall develop indicators of program quality that may be used by State and local programs receiving assistance under this title as models by which to judge the success of such programs, including success in recruitment and retention of students and improvement in the literacy skills of students. Such indicators shall take into account different conditions under which programs operate and shall be modified as better means of assessing program quality are developed (Section 361(c) of the Adult Education Act).

In addition, the National Literacy Act requires that states develop and implement their own indicators of program quality to be used to evaluate programs assisted under this title "to determine whether such programs are effective, including whether such programs are successfully recruiting, retaining, and improving the literacy skills of the individuals served in such programs" (Section 331 [a][2] of the Adult Education Act). **The indicators must be integrated into the state's evaluation system for local programs.** States had until July 1993 to develop and implement their indicators.

¹The reader is referred to the publication entitled *"Performance Indicators of Program Quality for Iowa's Adult Basic Education Programs"* (May 1993) for a thorough discussion of the development of Iowa's adult basic education program performance standards.

The performance indicators, developed through this process, have taken into account the different conditions under which Iowa's adult basic education programs operate and will be modified as better means of assessing program quality are identified. Their primary purpose is to **provide the state and local programs with performance indicators by which to judge the success of their programs**. These indicators represent the elements that the Iowa Department of Education, based on consultation with the field, views as essential to ensure high-quality services in adult basic education and literacy programs. [Refer to the publication entitled *Performance Indicators of Program Quality for Iowa's Adult Basic Education Programs* (May 1993).]

QUALITY INDICATORS, MEASURES AND PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

The National Literacy Act specified that indicators were to be developed in the areas of recruitment, retention, and learning gains. In addition, the U.S. Department of Education identified two general topic areas for which indicators were to be developed: *program process and content*, and *student outcomes*. *Program process and content* refers to components of the program that define how it operates, such as: (1) program planning, (2) recruitment of students, (3) intake, (4) assessment, (5) staff characteristics, (6) curriculum and instructional content, (7) materials and equipment, (8) assessment of student progress, (9) evaluation, and (10) follow-up. *Student outcomes* refers to the impact of the program on students, such as learning gains and goal attainment.

To guide the development of Iowa's performance indicators, a framework for the quality indicator development process was established utilizing the national model developed by Pelavin Associates for the U.S. Department of Education. It was especially important to distinguish quality indicators from performance measures and performance standards. The three terms are often used interchangeably, yet they differ conceptually. Defining them clarified the development process and the meaning of a quality indicator (*Pelavin Associates, 1991*).

DEFINITION OF TERMS

The following definitions were adapted from the definitions referenced in the national model developed by Pelavin Associates for the U.S. Department of Education, and the *Oregon Benchmarks* publication (*Pelavin Associates, 1991; Oregon Progress Board, 1994b*). These definitions were utilized for benchmark development.

Benchmarks. Quantitative indicators of progress to assess achievement of long-range strategic program goals.

Core Benchmarks. Benchmarks which describe the crucial program values designed to benefit the individual and society.

Performance Measure. The data or process used to determine the quantitative or qualitative level of performance.

Performance Standard. A measure with a specific numeric criterion, qualitative statement or level of performance tied to it. A performance standard defines a level of acceptable performance for a specific performance measure or clarifies a process when a performance measure is viewed as qualitative. There are three types of performance standards: 1) quantitative, 2) qualitative, 3) a combination of quantitative and qualitative. A quantitative standard defines a specific numeric criterion or a level of performance. A qualitative standard defines a process or series of activities. A qualitative standard is used to qualify a process oriented performance measure. In some cases, a performance standard may be classified as a combination of quantitative and qualitative.

Quality Indicator. A variable that reflects effective and efficient program performance.

Values. Those ideals which are deemed important to a program.

Vision. A futuristic view of program direction and achievements.

CHARACTERISTICS OF BENCHMARKS

Benchmarks are indicators of progress that indicate whether Iowa's adult basic education program is achieving long-range strategic goals. For example, one benchmark indicates the literacy level of Iowa's adult population. Iowa's benchmarks have targets set in five-year intervals. By 2005, 89 percent of Iowa's adults should have basic proficiency in reading and understanding prose text, an important capability in a well-educated worker and citizen. The *Iowa State Adult Literacy Survey* (IASALS), conducted in 1993, found that 22-26 percent of Iowa's adults lack this skill level.

Core benchmarks are designated to indicate the crucial program values designed to benefit the individual or society. Iowa's adult basic education program has designated 16 of the 29 benchmarks as core benchmarks. These 16 core benchmarks identify the program values inherent in Iowa's adult basic education program.

Benchmarks are most useful when they have a practical connection to strategic goals and when they can be measured easily and uniformly by those responsible for keeping track of them. Here is a checklist of important benchmarks characteristics:

- **An emphasis on results.** This is unquestionably the most important characteristic of any benchmark. Benchmarks should place a priority on measuring results (for example, adult literacy) rather than efforts (the amount of money spent on literacy education). Outcomes are a more telling indicator of achievement than programs and expenditures intended to achieve outcomes. By staying focused on outcomes, and by keeping track of results, public officials can reset priorities and adapt and modify programs as they learn what works. Occasionally, however, input benchmarks (such as per capita expenditures on public infrastructure) are used when an outcome is difficult or prohibitively expensive to measure.
- **Comparability.** Benchmark measures should be comparable, as much as possible, with similar measures in like jurisdictions, and with other states and nations.
- **Long-range reliability.** Benchmarks should be reliable over long periods of time, up to two decades or more, a typical horizon for strategic planning.
- **Accessibility.** Benchmarks data should be reasonably easy to gather and analyze at periodic intervals (a year, two years, five years).
- **Documentation.** Benchmarks should come from credible sources, whether primary (commissioned research) or secondary (published research by others). It is helpful to append endnotes or footnotes to benchmarks which provide users additional rationale, measurement criteria, and source information for each benchmark (*Oregon Progress Board*, 1994a, p.p. 13-14).

TYPES OF BENCHMARK DATA

There are several different kinds of benchmark data. Some, such as census statistics, are directly obtainable from official sources. Other types of data are based on survey results compiled from a representative sample of Iowa's adult population. A case in point is the *Iowa State Adult Literacy Survey* (IASALS), a literacy assessment of Iowa adults. Another example of survey data is *The Iowa Adult Basic Skills Survey* (IABSS), which surveyed a number of different agencies and organizations to determine priority competency areas for basic life skills and employability skills needed by Iowa's adult population.

BENCHMARK SELECTION CRITERIA

The benchmark committee used the following questions as guidelines in the selection of appropriate benchmarks:

- Is the benchmark understandable?
- Does the benchmark tie directly to the ABE program's mission?
- Can sufficient, accurate and reliable information to support the benchmark be obtained?
- Does the benchmark reflect significant aspects of ABE program operations?
- Does the benchmark accurately capture the information intended?

ACCOUNTABILITY

Iowa's community college based adult basic education program has always strived toward program accountability. The following characteristics define the nucleus of Iowa's statewide accountability system.

A Flexible Framework for Systemic Reform. A statewide accountability system is a mechanism for focusing on the results of investments in literacy and improving our return on those investments. It is a powerful tool for systemic change—a guide for states just beginning the change process. It builds capacity in four specific areas within Iowa's statewide adult basic education delivery system.

- **A literacy accountability system focuses efforts to achieve national and state goals.** A statewide literacy system that aims to enable adults to lead more productive lives must be aligned with larger state and federal human resource and economic development goals. Developing a statewide accountability system to measure progress toward these goals requires interagency cooperation, program collaboration, coordination service delivery strategies, and the integrated effort of all stakeholders in the system.
- **It measures progress by measuring results, not process.** Federal and state reporting systems have focused in the past on inputs such as the number of clients/students enrolled or the number of hours they attended classes. Such measures tell us little about the real value of the program. A state accountability system guides a state towards defining what it wants to achieve—real changes in people's lives.
- **An accountability system that links literacy to broader state goals puts in place a management information system that enables agencies to streamline reporting and share information.** A state accountability system provides a mechanism for agreement on common definitions and elements, and encourages the use of compatible electronic databases to centralize information for easy access and updating. Centralized information about programs makes possible one-stop program shopping. Centralized participant files allow students to relocate without losing their records.
- **It ensures the continuous improvement of programs towards 100% results.** A state literacy accountability system provides information to program managers about how well their programs work and to state policymakers about the effectiveness of their policies. Able to identify the strengths and weaknesses within their system, states can build on programs and strategies that work, discontinue those that don't, and isolate problems that need alternative strategies, not additional resources. (*National Institute for Literacy, 1995, p.p. 4-7*).

A STATE-WIDE ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM

For Measuring Results . . .

A state accountability system helps Iowa's adult basic education local programs know how they are doing in . . .

- Moving toward national and state goals for literacy and lifelong learning.
- Building knowledge and skills for adults to compete in a global economy.
- Building knowledge and skills to exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.
- Building knowledge and skills to assure that parents are participants in their children's education.

To Demonstrate that Literacy Works For . . .

Adult Learners, who become active participants in their learning process. They gain easier access to the system, learn up front about program alternatives, define their own goals, and choose the programs to meet these goals.

- **As Parents:** They set a good example; help children with moral, social, and intellectual development; become independent of financial aid.
- **As Workers:** They get, keep and upgrade jobs; become more flexible workers; teach and learn from others in the workplace; and contribute to the productivity of the organization, the community, the state, and the nation.
- **As Citizens:** They become informed citizens; participate in the political process; contribute to the community to the community's development; gain citizenship; and vote.

Service Providers, who know what performance is expected, are able to track progress toward goals, and gain greater accountability for results. Streamlined reporting requirements mean they spend less time on paperwork and more on client needs.

State Agencies, who can share resources and information with other state agencies to consolidate and streamline existing programs. This information is necessary to evaluate and improve programs by identifying barriers and providing incentives for more effective policy and program development.

State and Federal Legislators, who are able to link literacy outcomes to broader state and national policies, and gain a better understanding of the value of investment in literacy.

All Citizens, who see their tax dollars producing efficient and effective literacy programs that yield good neighbors, better co-workers and contributing community members.

The following steps define the process to establish a state-wide literacy accountability system:

- Define Vision and Benchmarks.
- Define Policy Outcomes.
- Identify Performance Measures for Policy Outcomes.
- Define Program Outcomes Related to Policy Outcomes.
- Identify Program Performance Measures.
- Identify Target Populations Related to Policy and Program Outcomes.
- Compare Existing Service Delivery Patterns With Needs.
- Collect Data and Communicate Results to Various Literacy Stakeholders.
- Use Information to Improve Program Interventions.
- Use Information to Adjust Resources and Policies (*National Institute for Literacy*, 1995, p.p. 4-7).

IOWA'S "LITERACY/ABE VISION" 2005

The Iowa benchmarks were formulated and developed to measure progress towards "Iowa's Literacy/ABE Vision 2005."

- The literacy rates for Iowa's adult population will be benchmarked through the *National Adult Literacy Survey* (NALS) and the *Iowa State Adult Literacy Survey* (IASALS).
- National education goal #6 will have been achieved in Iowa. The goal states "By the year 2000, every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship."
- The concept of distance learning will be an accepted instructional strategy for adult and continuing education through the use of technology and fiber optics communication (Iowa Communications Network: ICN).
- All basic skills instruction, curriculum and assessment strategies and methodologies will be competency based.
- Every ABE student's learning gains will be measured in terms of student outcomes and specific quantifiable competencies. Each student will receive a transcript of outcome based competencies and the specific level of achievement for each competency.
- "Certificates of Achievement" will be awarded to ABE students for attainment of predetermined levels of performance in selected subject areas (i.e. reading and mathematics).
- A total articulation system, utilizing a common data base, has been developed and utilized across all agencies and other entities involving students' learning needs and goals.
- The existing community college delivery system for adult basic education programs will continue to serve the literacy needs of Iowa's adult target populations.
- The adult basic education programs will demonstrate total accountability in all aspects of program operations.
- The GED pass rate for Iowa's GED candidates will be 95-97%.

THE IMPORTANCE OF IOWA'S ADULT BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAM INDICATORS, STANDARDS AND BENCHMARKS

The standards and benchmarks:

- **Articulate** the indicators of program quality.
- **Establish** the criteria against which local and state program effectiveness and accountability will be evaluated.
- **Define** the processes, priorities and overall operating principles that Iowa's adult basic education programs deem essential to effective program performance.

-
-
- **Communicate** program effectiveness to other entities in the literacy coalition (i.e. JOBS, JTPA, Corrections, Business and Industry, etc.).
 - **Form** the basis for effective and pro-active decision making.
 - **Comply** with the federal mandate for program accountability.
 - **Document** the effectiveness and importance of Iowa's community college based integrated delivery system designed for coordination and delivery of literacy services to all eligible adult target population(s).
 - **Measure** progress towards defined and projected program outcomes.
 - **Serve** as one of the important benchmarks in achieving national educational goal number six which states:

"By the year 2000, every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship."

THE IOWA CONTEXT

The formulation of Iowa's adult basic education program benchmarks utilized the national performance indicators developed by Pelavin Associates, Inc., for the U.S. Department of Education, Division of Vocational and Adult Education (1991). The Iowa benchmark committee, a sub-committee of the adult basic education coordinators' group, reviewed the Pelavin model and made appropriate modifications and revisions which reflected the reality of program practices inherent in Iowa's adult basic education programs. The benchmarks measures were twice reviewed and modified by the benchmark committee. The adult basic education coordinators approved the benchmarks after the second revision.

During the formulation and development of the benchmarks, the benchmark committee utilized several data sources to serve as documentation for the genesis of the benchmarks. The major data sources were: (1) Iowa's State Plan and Amendments for Adult Basic Education: Fiscal Years 1990-1996, (2) The Adult Basic Education Federal Annual Program Performance Report, (3) The General Educational Development Testing Service (GEDTS) and the Iowa GED Annual Statistical Reports, (4) The Iowa High School Equivalency Diplomas data base developed by the Iowa Department of Education, (5) a variety of policy memoranda, developed by the Iowa Department of Education, outlining program practices and procedures on various aspects of adult basic education program and staff development activities, (6) 1990 federal census data, (7) a variety of research and accountability studies conducted on various aspects of Iowa's ABE/ESL/GED program. [See References Section and Appendix A.]

Throughout the entire process of benchmark articulation, many persons and organizations were involved in the formulation, development and review of the benchmarks. This process has assured the field of adult basic education in Iowa that the benchmarks quantify the reality of acceptable performance of the many and varied aspects of meeting the intent of national education goal number six which states **"by the year 2000, every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship."**

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IOWA'S ADULT BASIC EDUCATION PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

PERFORMANCE BENCHMARKS' PHILOSOPHY

The benchmarks for Iowa's adult basic education programs were developed with a philosophy and goal of program improvement and accountability. The benchmarks represent the philosophical and practical yardstick by which Iowa's adult basic education programs will be judged and evaluated. The benchmarks also represent the effectiveness of an integrated system for the delivery of basic skills education to Iowa's adult populous through the community college continuing education network. Several national research studies have concluded that states which have integrated delivery systems have greater accountability and effectiveness as opposed to those states which have a pattern of unconnected entities.

BENCHMARKS' PROCESS

The benchmarks, listed on the following pages, have three separate components: (1) a listing of the benchmarks cross referenced by the performance standards' number. [See Appendix B], (2) endnotes to the benchmarks, and (3) the benchmark measures are divided and labeled as *historical* and *target* year indicators. The historical indicators represent the level of performance for 1995. The target year indicators represent the level of performance to be achieved by 2000 and 2005.

ANALYSIS

An analysis of the benchmarks indicates the following observations:

- There are twenty performance standards from which the benchmarks were developed. [See Appendix B.]
- There are twenty-nine benchmarks prorated across six focus areas.
- Sixteen of the 29 benchmarks are designated as core benchmarks.
- All benchmarks are projected for target years 2000 and 2005 in terms of percentages or actual numbers.

The following table displays the relationship between the number of performance standards and benchmarks by focus area.

TABLE 1 A Cross Reference Guide to the Number of Performance Standards and Benchmarks by Focus Area		
Focus Area	Number of Performance Standards Utilized for Benchmark Development	Number of Benchmarks Developed from Performance Standards
1.0 Educational Gains	5	8
2.0 Program Planning	4	8
3.0 Curriculum/Instruction	2	3
4.0 Staff Development	3	4
5.0 Support Services	4	4
6.0 Recruitment/Retention	2	2
	<u>20</u>	<u>29</u>

UTILIZATION OF BENCHMARKS

The benchmarks, presented in this report, fulfill the mandate of the proposed federal block grant legislation. They provide invaluable guidance to the states, local programs, the field, and policymakers at all levels.

For Iowa's community college adult basic education programs, the benchmarks and the process used in their development has added another measure of accountability.

For local programs, the benchmarks offer a clear and concise method of judging the success of their programs and promoting program improvement.

For the field, the benchmarks offer a focus for basic and applied research, innovative practices, evaluative studies, and technical assistance efforts.

For policymakers, the benchmarks provide better, more appropriate, and more accurate information on the effectiveness of Iowa's adult basic education programs and delivery system—information that will enhance their understanding of the value of Iowa's community colleges continuing education delivery system.

Focus Area: 1.0 EDUCATIONAL GAINS

BENCHMARKS

Performance Standard No.	Benchmark No.	Benchmark Title	Historical	Target Years	
			1995	2000	2005
1.21.1	1	Percentage of adult basic education students whose educational progress will be measured in terms of competency based outcomes.	10%	50%	90%
1.23.1	2	♦ Core Percentage of adults 18 years and over who have attained a high school or equivalent diploma.	81%	85%	90%
1.23.2	3	♦ Core Percentage of Iowa's GED candidates who pass the General Educational Development (GED) Examinations by Iowa state standards.	92%	95%	97%
1.24.1	4	Percentage of Iowa's GED graduates planning further education/training.	65%	70%	80%
1.24.1	5	Percentage of Iowa's GED graduates who enroll full-time or graduate from post-secondary institutions.	12%	15%	20%
1.31.1	6	Percentage of adults 16 years and over functioning at the five levels of Prose Literacy (understand and analyze text information).			
		A. Level 1	14%	9%	4%
		♦ Core B. Level 2	24%	19%	14%
		C. Level 3	37%	42%	46%
		D. Level 4	21%	24%	27%
		E. Level 5	3%	6%	9%
1.31.1	7	Percentage of adults 16 years and over functioning at the five levels of Document Literacy (understand and use graphs, text, maps, etc.).			
		A. Level 1	16%	12%	8%
		♦ Core B. Level 2	27%	22%	17%
		C. Level 3	36%	40%	43%
		D. Level 4	19%	22%	25%
		E. Level 5	2%	4%	7%
1.31.1	8	Percentage of adults 16 years and over functioning at the five levels of Quantitative Literacy (understand and apply mathematical concepts).			
		A. Level 1	15%	13%	9%
		♦ Core B. Level 2	22%	16%	12%
		C. Level 3	36%	40%	44%
		D. Level 4	23%	26%	29%
		E. Level 5	4%	5%	6%

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Focus Area: 2.0 PROGRAM PLANNING

BENCHMARKS

Performance Standard No.	Bench- mark No.	Benchmark Title	Historical	Target Years	
			1995	2000	2005
2.11.1	9	❖Core Percentage of local ABE program plans that are submitted to be in compliance with Iowa's Adult Basic Education Plan.	100%	100%	100%
2.11.1	10	Percentage of local program plans that are kept on record for five years.	100%	100%	100%
2.12.1	11	Percentage of local participatory planning committee minutes, questionnaires and surveys available at the local site.	100%	100%	100%
2.12.1	12	Percentage of local programs participating in periodic business and industry state and local needs assessments.	50%	60%	70%
2.13.1	13	❖Core Percentage of local programs that submit year-end reports to the Iowa Department of Education which documents local program accomplishments.	100%	100%	100%
2.13.1	14	Percentage of local programs that document evaluation of program needs.	80%	90%	100%
2.14.1	15	❖Core Percentage of local program teacher training plans designed to reflect anticipated needs.	100%	100%	100%
2.14.1	16	❖Core Percentage of local program teacher training plans that reflects the identified participants' needs.	100%	100%	100%

Focus Area: 3.0 CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

BENCHMARKS

Performance Standard No.	Bench- mark No.	Benchmark Title	Historical	Target Years	
			1995	2000	2005
3.11.1	17	❖ <i>Core</i> Percentage of Iowa's ABE programs that have a method in place which correlates curriculum/instructional materials with assessed skill levels.	Could not determine from existing databases or current research.	95%	100%
3.11.1	18	Percentage of Iowa's ABE programs that, as evidenced by course outlines, target priority Iowa Adult Basic Skills Survey (IABSS) competencies in concert with basic skills.	Could not determine from existing databases or current research.	90%	100%
3.13.1	19	Percentage of Iowa's ABE programs implementing a procedure for identifying student needs/goals and strategies for attaining these goals.	Could not determine from existing databases or current research.	95%	100%

Focus Area: 4.0 STAFF DEVELOPMENT

BENCHMARKS

Performance Standard No.	Bench- mark No.	Benchmark Title	Historical	Target Years	
			1995	2000	2005
4.11.1	20	❖Core Percentage of ABE personnel participating in statewide Staff Development Opportunities.	30%	40%	50%
4.11.1	21	❖Core Percentage of ABE personnel participating in local staff development opportunities.	90%	95%	100%
4.11.3	22	Number of volunteer tutors trained on an annual basis.	335	370	400
4.13.1	23	Percentage of staff evaluated by ABE coordinators or their designated appointees.	100%	100%	100%

Focus Area: 5.0 SUPPORT SERVICES

BENCHMARKS

Performance Standard No.	Bench- mark No.	Benchmark Title	Historical	Target Years	
			1995	2000	2005
5.11.1	24	❖Core Percentage of linkages that exist between the ABE program and Support Service Agencies.	100%	100%	100%
5.11.2	25	Percentage of State and Local plans specifying Community Resources for Student Support.	100%	100%	100%
5.12.1	26	Percentage of Agencies represented on Participatory Planning Committees.	100%	100%	100%
5.13.1	27	❖Core Number of Clients referred to ABE on an annual basis through Welfare Reform.	1775	2000	1850

Focus Area: 6.0 RECRUITMENT/RETENTION

BENCHMARKS

Performance Standard No.	Bench- mark No.	Benchmark Title	Historical	Target Years	
			1995	2000	2005
6.11.1	28	❖ <i>Core</i> The percentage of priority target population(s) served statewide.	57%	59%	63%
7.11.1	29	❖ <i>Core</i> The percentage of target population(s) completing or continuing in the program.	76%	78%	80%

ENDNOTES TO THE BENCHMARKS

Benchmark No.	1
Benchmark Title	Percentage of adult basic education students whose educational progress will be measured in terms of competency based outcomes.
Explanation	Iowa's adult basic education programs are pilot testing several different aspects of competency based education utilizing the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS). The results have been highly successful.
Rationale	A competency-based model provides a systems approach to adult basic education. In a CBE model, program design begins by identifying the desired outcomes or goals of instruction. One of the first questions asked is, "What is the student going to be able to do as a result of the instruction?" Then, based on these intended outcomes, curriculum is designed and instructional materials are selected or created that support it. Finally, an assessment system that includes various types of measurements and that matches the intended outcomes is adopted. A similar systems approach is used in many General Educational Development (GED) preparation programs. In these programs, pretesting, targeted instruction, selection of materials post-testing, and certification (i.e., official GED), are all done in terms of previously identified GED learner outcomes. An important measure of student progress in these programs is successful completion of the GED examinations.
Source	Annual Performance Report for the Adult Basic Education State-Administered Program.

Benchmark No.	2 ♦ Core
Benchmark Title	Percentage of adults 18 years and over who have attained a high school or equivalent diploma.
Explanation	Iowa traditionally has had a high percentage of the adult population graduate from high school or attain the equivalent diploma (GED). This benchmark measures progress towards the continued excellence of Iowa's educational system.
Rationale	The proportion of Iowa's workforce with at least a high school education has continually increased and will continue to do so as we move toward the year 2010. In general, those Iowa workers now reaching retirement age or who will be retiring over the next 20 years are less well-educated than those workers now entering the workforce. The proportion of graduating Iowa high school seniors going on to post-secondary education has increased from about 50% in the late-1970s to almost 65% in 1995.
Source	1940-1990 Federal Census Data with Projections for Years 2000 and 2010.

ENDNOTES TO THE BENCHMARKS

Benchmark No.	3 ♦ Core
Benchmark Title	Percentage of Iowa's GED candidates who pass the General Educational Development (GED) Examinations by Iowa state standards.
Explanation	The tests of General Educational Development (GED) provide adults who did not complete high school with an opportunity to earn a high school equivalency credential. By taking and passing a series of five tests in writing, social studies, science, interpreting literature and the arts, and mathematics, adults demonstrate they have acquired a level of learning that is comparable to that of high school graduates.
Rationale	The Iowa Department of Education conducted a two, five and ten year follow-up study of Iowa's GED graduates. The conclusions were: 1) The preponderance of evidence indicated that those who passed the GED Tests in Iowa benefited substantially from earning their Iowa High School Equivalency diplomas. 2) Over time, all benefits were lasting and positive. 3) The overwhelming majority, of GED graduates who enrolled in the ABE program, reported that attending ABE classes had helped them acquire the requisite knowledge necessary to pass the GED Tests.
Source	Iowa 1995 Annual GED Statistical Report.

Benchmark No.	4
Benchmark Title	Percentage of Iowa's GED graduates planning further education/training.
Explanation	An anticipated low unemployment rate, coupled with fewer new workers, will result in a limited pool of workers, especially in the entry-level segment. At the same time, the demand for unskilled labor will decrease. Rapid technological change will result in an increase in the skill content level of jobs. By 2000, 13% of all jobs will require the highest language and technological skill levels as compared to 6% in 1984. Jobs requiring the lowest skill levels will have shrunk from 9% to 4%.
Rationale	The proportion of Iowa's workforce with at least a high school education has continually increased and will continue to do so as we move toward the year 2010. In general, those Iowa workers now reaching retirement age or who will be retiring over the next 20 years are less well-educated than those workers now entering the workforce. The proportion of graduating Iowa high school seniors going on to post-secondary education has increased from about 50% in the late-1970s to almost 65% today.
Source	Iowa 1995 Annual GED Statistical Report. Iowa Workforce 2010: Work, Workers and Workplaces in the 21st Century: October 1990.

ENDNOTES TO THE BENCHMARKS

Benchmark No.	5
Benchmark Title	Percentage of Iowa's GED graduates who enroll full-time or graduate from post-secondary institutions.
Explanation	Research shows that many new jobs will require education and training beyond high school. Completing the GED enables adults to pursue further education. In 1994, 65.7% (nationally) of the GED candidates planned further study.
Rationale	In 1990, the Iowa Department of Education conducted a two, five and ten year follow-up study of Iowa's GED graduates: (1) 5% of the respondents were attending two-year colleges, (2) 7% graduated from two-year colleges, (3) 2% were attending four-year colleges, (4) 2% graduated from four-year colleges, (5) a total of 12% were enrolled full-time or had graduated from institutions of higher education. A greater percentage of GED graduates will enroll in institutions of higher education due to an increase in the technological skill content level of future jobs.
Source	What Has Happened to Iowa's GED Graduates? A Two, Five, and Ten Year Follow-Up Study: April 1992. Iowa Workforce 2010: Work, Workers and Workplaces in the 21st Century: October 1990.

Benchmark No.	6, 7, 8 ♦ Core: 6B, 7B, 8B.
Benchmark Title	6. Percentage of adults 16 years and over functioning at the five levels of Prose Literacy (understand and analyze text information). 7. Percentage of adults 16 years and over functioning at the five levels of Document Literacy (understand and use graphs, text, maps, etc.) 8. Percentage of adults 16 years and over functioning at the five levels of Quantitative Literacy (understand and apply mathematical concepts.)
Explanation	These benchmarks are indicators of the functional literacy skills in English of adult Iowans, ages 16 plus. They measure adult ability to answer questions of various degrees of difficulty regarding information in text (newspaper articles, warranties) and other documents (advertisements, graphs, pay slips, bus schedules, menus, unit pricing information).
Rationale	Workers need a broad variety of attributes that contribute to work success (for example, positive attitude toward work, ability to learn, listening skills, ability to work with others.) Levels of literacy are highly correlated with earnings potential and poverty.
Source	Adult Literacy in Iowa: Results of the State Adult Literacy Survey: February 1994.

ENDNOTES TO THE BENCHMARKS

Benchmark No.	9, 10 ♦ <i>Core for Benchmark #9.</i>
Benchmark Title	9. Percentage of local ABE program plans that are submitted to be in compliance with Iowa's Adult Basic Education Plan. 10. Percentage of local program plans that are kept on record for five years.
Explanation	Annually local ABE programs in Iowa submit updated and revised program plans. These are in compliance with Iowa's overall Adult Basic Education Plan and a record of these is kept at the state and local level.
Rationale	Local programs need to document plans that are in compliance with the federal rules and regulations.
Source	Annual Adult Basic Education Grant-for-Services Guidelines (Local Plan).

Benchmark No.	11, 12
Benchmark Title	11. Percentage of local participatory planning committee minutes, questionnaires and surveys available at the local site. 12. Percentage of local programs participating in periodic business and industry state and local needs assessments.
Explanation	Each local program will be open to community input for program planning through a variety of mechanisms including participatory planning committees and business and industry surveys.
Rationale	Local ABE programs need to be responsive to the needs of their local community. Input from committees, surveys and questionnaires can provide valuable feedback to local programs.
Source	Annual local program plan minutes. Iowa Adult Basic Skills Survey (IABSS) Study: April 1995. Assessment of Basic Skills Competencies in Iowa's Employment Workforce Programs: November, 1995 A Workforce Basic Skills Norming Study of Iowa's JTPA and Promise JOBS Target Populations: In Press.

ENDNOTES TO THE BENCHMARKS

Benchmark No.	13 ♦ Core
Benchmark Title	Percentage of local programs that submit year-end reports to the Iowa Department of Education which documents local program accomplishments.
Explanation	Each year local programs submit the Annual Performance Report and reports from Iowa are compiled.
Rationale	The Annual Performance Report provides an ongoing record of participation and performance both at the local and state level.
Source	Iowa Annual Performance Report for the Adult Basic Education State - Administered Program.

Benchmark No.	14
Benchmark Title	Percentage of local programs that document evaluation of program needs.
Explanation	Local programs need to assess and evaluate and one of the most effective ways is to ask teachers and others to evaluate what needs to stay the same or be changed.
Rationale	Teachers and students are involved directly with programs so they can easily and effectively identify any changes that need to be made.
Source	Local program compilation of teacher evaluations of local training needs.

Benchmark No.	15, 16 ♦ Core
Benchmark Title	16. Percentage of local program teacher training plans designed to reflect anticipated needs. 17. Percentage of local program teacher training plans that reflects the identified participants' needs.
Explanation	Local programs submit each April the anticipated teacher training to be accomplished. Flexibility is maintained and as actual participants' needs are identified and met, these are submitted to the state.
Rationale	Local programs can anticipate most teacher training activities but flexibility must allow for response to teacher actual needs throughout the year.
Source	Adult Basic Education Grant-for-Services Guidelines. ATT-1 and ATT-2 documents.

ENDNOTES TO THE BENCHMARKS

Benchmark No.	17 ♦ Core
Benchmark Title	Percentage of Iowa's ABE programs that have a method in place which correlates curriculum/instructional materials with assessed skill levels.
Explanation	While categorically every ABE program has curriculum which correlates instruction to individual students and assessed levels, individual program methods which correlate curriculum/instructional materials with skill levels are not benchmarked. Evidence of a method for correlating is considered to be of high value.
Rationale	It is in the interests of the learners to immediately engage them in instructional materials/curriculum that correlate with their needs and goals. Likewise, it is essential for ABE staff to have level-appropriate instructional resources identified and accessible.
Source	Performance Indicators of Program Quality for Iowa's ABE Programs: May 1993.

Benchmark No.	18
Benchmark Title	Percentage of Iowa's ABE programs that, as evidenced by course outlines, target priority Iowa Adult Basic Skills Survey (IABSS) competencies in concert with basic skills.
Explanation	As stated in "Iowa's Literacy/ABE Vision 2005", all basic skills instruction, curriculum, and assessment strategies and methodologies will be competency-based. Course outlines are a key vehicle for documenting the integration of basic skills with priority IABSS competencies. The percent of Iowa ABE programs utilizing course outlines is not currently benchmarked.
Rationale	Competency-based course outlines that include the application of basic skills in a functional context are characteristic of a competency-based program. IABSS findings provide a solid foundation for building competency-based curriculum that will be relevant to the learner for success in real-life situations, in academic programs, and in the job market..
Source	Iowa's Literacy/ABE Vision 2005 Statement Iowa Adult Basic Skills Survey (IABSS) Study: April 1995. Assessment of Basic Skills Competencies in Iowa's Employment Workforce Programs: November, 1995 A Workforce Basic Skills Norming Study of Iowa's JTPA and Promise JOBS Target Populations: In Press.

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ENDNOTES TO THE BENCHMARKS

Benchmark No.	19
Benchmark Title	Percentage of Iowa's ABE programs implementing a procedure for identifying student needs/goals and strategies for attaining these goals.
Explanation	While categorically in every ABE program a student goal-setting process exists, individual program methods across the state are not benchmarked. Evidence of program methods linking learner goals with appropriate curriculum and instruction is considered to be of high value.
Rationale	The collection of relevant student information (e.g. past education, employment, interests, goals, formal assessment) for the purpose of student goal-setting is a state ABE performance standard which undoubtedly is exercised by each Iowa ABE program. However, program processes across the state are not quantified; doing so would demonstrate accountability.
Source	Performance Indicators of Program Quality for Iowa's ABE Programs: May 1993.

Benchmark No.	20 ♦ Core
Benchmark Title	Percentage of ABE personnel participating in Statewide Staff Development Opportunities.
Explanation	A well-trained ABE staff has long been a high priority of Iowa's Adult Basic Education Program. This benchmark measures staff development participants at the State level.
Rationale	Statewide Staff Development Opportunities expose ABE teachers to new ideas and concepts from outside their own programs. This stimulates growth at the local level through innovative program ideas.
Source	Annual Adult Basic Evaluation Staff Development Report.

ENDNOTES TO THE BENCHMARKS

Benchmark No.	21 ♦ <i>Core</i>
Benchmark Title	Percentage of ABE personnel participating in local staff development opportunities.
Explanation	Iowa's program allows for each local program to create staff development opportunities of its own. Local ABE teachers meet and hear selected presenters in addition to exchanging ideas with one another. This benchmark measures local ABE Staff Development.
Rationale	The proportion of Iowa's ABE teachers who participate in local staff development opportunities has traditionally been high and will continue to be so as the program moves into the 21st Century.
Source	Annual local ABE program staff development plans. ATT-1 and ATT-2 documents.

Benchmark No.	22
Benchmark Title	Number of volunteer tutors trained on an annual basis.
Explanation	Volunteers are an essential part of the literacy level of ABE programming. This benchmark would measure the number of volunteers trained on an annual basis.
Rationale	One-on-one or in-class tutoring has long been an important element of Iowa's ABE program. The use of volunteers can be expected to increase as more and more people seek help through ABE.
Source	Annual Iowa Literacy Program Report.

Benchmark No.	23
Benchmark Title	Percentage of staff evaluated by coordinators or their designated appointees.
Explanation	Staff performance can be measured through evaluation according to a set of criteria. This benchmark would provide for the measurement of teacher performance.
Rationale	Iowa can be accountable in its staff performance through measured performance of staff according to criteria deemed essential by program coordinators.
Source	Annual local ABE program staff development plans.

ENDNOTES TO THE BENCHMARKS

Benchmark No.	24 ♦ <i>Core</i>
Benchmark Title	Percentage of linkages that exist between the ABE program and Support Service Agencies.
Explanation	Support Service Agencies such as the Department of Human services, JTPA, etc., are essential to the operation of the ABE Programs throughout the state. This benchmark measures the degree to which interagency cooperation is a part of Iowa's ABE program.
Rationale	The number of linkages that exist between ABE and Support Service Agencies has traditionally been high. Increased effort on the part of Iowa's ABE programs will result in increased linkages with support service agencies particularly in the workplace. However, if the agencies decrease, 100 percent involvement will be a program goal.
Source	Iowa Plan for Adult Basic Education: Fiscal Years 1990-1993 and Amendments for Fiscal Years 1993-1996. Local ABE program plans for Fiscal Years 1993-1996.

Benchmark No.	25
Benchmark Title	Percentage of State and Local Plans specifying Community Resources for Student Support.
Explanation	Iowa's ABE programs have traditionally reached out to other community resources for student supports and referrals. These linkages are written into State and Local plans. This benchmark measures commitment to interagency cooperation through written plans.
Rationale	The cooperation of Adult Basic Education and community resources has a rich tradition in the State of Iowa. Efforts are continually made to upgrade these relationships, and ever-widening collaborations can be expected as Iowa approaches the 21st Century.
Source	Iowa Plan for Adult Basic Education: Fiscal Years 1990-1993 and Amendments for Fiscal Years 1993-1996. Local ABE program plans for Fiscal Years 1993-1996.

ENDNOTES TO THE BENCHMARKS

Benchmark No.	26
Benchmark Title	Percentage of agencies represented on Participatory Planning Committees.
Explanation	Iowa traditionally has involved key leaders from support service agencies in its Participatory Planning Committees. This benchmark measures involvement by community resources in the planning of ABE programs.
Rationale	The inclusion of community agencies at the grass roots planning stage is indicative of the strong foundation of Iowa's ABE program. The program will always strive for 100 percent involvement of participatory planning committee members.
Source	Iowa Plan for Adult Basic Education: Fiscal Years 1990-1993 and Amendments for Fiscal Years 1993-1996. Local ABE program plans for Fiscal Years 1993-1996.

Benchmark No.	27 ♦ <i>Core</i>
Benchmark Title	Number of Clients referred to ABE on an annual basis through Welfare Reform.
Explanation	Each month Iowa receives lists from the Department of Human Services which tells the ABE program of new welfare recipients who might be in need of ABE/GED. Iowa has traditionally served this population in an attempt to educate them for the workforce. This benchmark measures number of welfare recipients served.
Rationale	The cooperation between human services and ABE/GED has traditionally been a strong one. Iowa's ABE program expect to serve as many referrals as possible from this source.
Source	Monthly listing of Department of Human Services applicants, 16 years of age and older who are head of household and do not have a high school diploma, that is provided to the Department of Education, Bureau of Community Colleges.

ENDNOTES TO THE BENCHMARKS

Benchmark No.	28 ♦ <i>Core</i>
Benchmark Title	The percentage of priority target population(s) served.
Explanation	Table 5 of the Annual Performance Report delineates the status of ABE participants upon entry into the program. The following categories fall into the priority target populations addressed in <i>Iowa Adult Literacy Profiles</i> newsletter: • disabled adults • immigrants • employed • unemployed • public assistance. Additional target populations addressed in the newsletter were: • able-bodied welfare recipients • low-wage earners who were not recipients of public assistance • at-risk youth • dropouts with relatively high educational attainment • persons for whom English was their second language • least educated school dropouts.
Rationale	Recruitment of the prioritized target population meets the intent and purpose of the Adult Education Act. The target populations have the potential of becoming productive and contributing citizens.
Source	Iowa Adult Literacy Profiles Newsletter: Vol. 1, No. 3; August, 1995. Annual Performance Report for the Adult Basic Education State-Administered Program (Table #5).

Benchmark No.	29 ♦ <i>Core</i>
Benchmark Title	The percentage of target population(s) completing or continuing in the program.
Explanation	Table 3 of the Annual Performance Report denotes participant progress and separation. For FY '95 the overall retention rate was 76% (29% completion, 47% still progressing).
Rationale	Student retention is a strong value of ABE; however, it is a constant challenge due to the nature of the target population. Retention rates have declined since 1992 when it was 84%. Targeted percentages are based on the continuous quality improvement of learner-centered competency-based curriculum, cooperative learning and other innovative teaching strategies, and staff development.
Source	Annual Performance Report for the Adult Basic Education State-Administered Program (Table #3).

EPILOGUE

Program benchmarks provide clear and unambiguous methods for assessing the success of a program in meeting strategic program goals. They promote program improvement by pointing to areas of excellence and weakness. Ideally, benchmarks will help all users of adult basic education services and those responsible for administering them. Policy makers could use the information from benchmarks to formulate decisions. Administrators could assess the effectiveness of programs to improve them to better meet the needs of the adult clientele and the community.

This landmark report has served as a one in a series of accountability studies in the field of adult basic education. [See Appendix A.] With the advent of the 1990's, accountability and proactiveness will be the conceptual banner around which Iowa's community colleges' adult and continuing educators will rally. This report has clearly demonstrated the excellence and quality of programs currently being offered.

It is then the challenge of Iowa's adult basic education programs to maintain these high standards of excellence, quality, innovativeness, accountability and proactiveness throughout the 1990's and into the twenty-first century.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

**A CHRONOLOGICAL LISTING OF CONTINUING
EDUCATION/ADULT BASIC EDUCATION/GED ACCOUNTABILITY
STUDIES AND BENCHMARK DATA SOURCES
(1982-1996)**

A CHRONOLOGICAL LISTING OF CONTINUING EDUCATION/ADULT BASIC EDUCATION/ GED ACCOUNTABILITY STUDIES

STUDY	STATUS	IMPACT
1. The GED Experience: Reaching Out to People (Iowa Dept. of Education)	Completed July 1982	Evaluated the effectiveness of Iowa's GED delivery system.
2. Bright Horizons: Iowa GED Writing Skills Pilot Project Final Report (Iowa Dept. of Education)	Completed July 1985 (ED 256-956)	Determined the feasibility of including an essay component on the GED examinations.
3. Iowa's Literacy/Adult Basic Education Target Population Studies (Iowa Dept. of Education)		
A. Iowa's Adult Basic Education Students: Descriptive Profiles Based on Motivations, Cognitive Ability and Socio-Demographic Variables.	Completed May 1987 (ED 290-048)	Determined the marketing and motivational characteristics of adult basic education students and reasons for attending the Adult Basic Education pro- gram.
B. Iowa's ESL Students: A Descriptive Profile.	Completed December 1987 (ED 290-049)	Determined the motivational and marketing characteristics of Iowa's ESL students en- rolled in Adult Basic Educa- tion programs.
C. Reasons for Nonparticipation Among Iowa's Adults Who Are Eligible for ABE.	Completed March 1989 (ED 306-426)	Documented the reasons that adults who are eligible for Adult Basic Education pro- grams choose not to partici- pate.

A CHRONOLOGICAL LISTING OF CONTINUING EDUCATION/ADULT BASIC EDUCATION/ GED ACCOUNTABILITY STUDIES

STUDY	STATUS	IMPACT
4. ABE/GED in Community Colleges: A Status Report (U.S. Dept. of Education)	Completed June 1988	Determine the characteristics of effective community college ABE/GED programs in those states that utilize community colleges for their primary delivery system.
5. Iowa's Norming Study of the Tests of General Educational Development (Iowa Depart. of Education)	Completed October 1989 (ED 314-474)	Documented the performance level of Iowa's GED candidates in relationship to a norm group of Iowa's graduating high school seniors.
6. Assessing the Educational Needs of Iowa's Homeless Youth and Adults (Iowa Dept. of Education)	Completed December 1989	Determined the number of Iowa's adult homeless and their educational needs.
7. Assessment and Adult Basic Education: The Iowa Model (Iowa Dept. of Education)	Completed May 1990 (ED 321-028)	Determined the current assessment procedures utilized in Iowa's Adult Basic Education programs as part of a measure of Iowa's educational accountability.
8. Continuing Education Outcomes at Iowa's Community Colleges (Iowa Dept. of Education)	Completed April 1991 (ED 331-560)	Provide outcome measures for Iowa's Adult and Continuing Education programs in the community colleges.

A CHRONOLOGICAL LISTING OF CONTINUING EDUCATION/ADULT BASIC EDUCATION/ GED ACCOUNTABILITY STUDIES

STUDY	STATUS	IMPACT
9. Labor Supply in Iowa: Policies for Economic Growth (University of Iowa)	Completed March 1991	Documented the status of Iowa's labor market in relation to formulation of policies for economic growth.
10. Relationship of the GED Test to Skills Needed in the Workplace (GEDTS).	Completed 1991	Provided documentation of the basic skills needed in the workplace and the comparable skills measured by the GED Tests.
11. A Two, Five and Ten-Year Follow-Up of Iowa's GED Graduates. (Iowa Dept. of Education)	Completed April 1992 (ED 344-047)	Provide accountability as to the immediate, intermediate and long-range impact of Iowa's GED instructional and testing program.
12. GED Profiles: Adults in Transition (GEDTS)	Completed 1992	A series of six reports that present information about adult learners compiled from a national survey of people who took the GED Tests.
13. Outcomes of GED Graduation: An Annotated Bibliography of Research Reports. (University of Georgia)	Completed December 1992	An annotated bibliography designed to document the outcomes of GED graduates.
14. Development of performance indicators of program effectiveness. (Iowa Dept. of Education)	Completed May 1993	Provided performance indicators of program effectiveness in serving the literacy needs of Iowa's adult population.

A CHRONOLOGICAL LISTING OF CONTINUING EDUCATION/ADULT BASIC EDUCATION/ GED ACCOUNTABILITY STUDIES

STUDY	STATUS	IMPACT
15. National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS) (Educational Testing Service)	Completed 1993	Measure and estimate the literacy abilities of Americans aged 16-64, according to race, ethnicity, levels of education, gender, and other significant variables.
16. National Evaluation of Adult Education Programs (U.S. Dept. of Education: Developmental Associates, Inc.)	Completed 1994	Evaluation of the potential of national programs supported by the Adult Education Act.
17. Iowa's Adult Basic Education Programs: A Survey of Learner Demographics and Preliminary Skill Levels. (CASAS: San Diego, CA)	Completed September 1993	Initial evaluation of Iowa's Adult Basic Education target populations utilizing the CASAS appraisal instruments.
18. Iowa Adult Basic Skills Survey. (CASAS: San Diego, CA)	Completed March 1994	Determine the priority competency areas for basic life and employability skills needed by Iowa's adult population.
19. Adult Literacy in Iowa: Results of the State Adult Literacy Survey [IASALS]. (Educational Testing Service)	Completed February 1994 (ED 373-110)	Measure and estimate the literacy abilities of Iowans aged 16+, according to race, ethnicity, levels of education, gender, and other significant variables.

A CHRONOLOGICAL LISTING OF CONTINUING EDUCATION/ADULT BASIC EDUCATION/ GED ACCOUNTABILITY STUDIES

STUDY	STATUS	IMPACT
20. Graphic Supplement for the Iowa State Adult Literacy Survey. (IA Dept. of Education)	Completed March 1994 (ED 370-964)	A graphic supplement for the IASALS Report.
21. Iowa CASAS Pilot Project Reports. (IA Dept. of Education)	Completed September 1994	An initial evaluation of CASAS effectiveness in Iowa's Adult Basic Education Programs.
22. "Iowa Adult Literacy Profiles" Newsletter Series. (Hal Beder: Rutgers University)		A series of newsletters documenting the secondary analysis of the Iowa State Adult Literacy Survey (IASALS) study.
A. An Overview of NALS & IASALS in relation to adult literacy target populations.	Completed November 1994 (Volume 1; No. 1)	A policy analysis of potential target population(s) for literacy education in Iowa.
B. The Economics of Adult Literacy in Iowa	Completed February 1995 (Volume 1; No. 2)	A policy analysis of literacy scores in relation to socio-economic variables.
C. Iowa's Adult Basic Education Priority Target Populations	Completed August 1995 (Volume 1; No. 3)	A policy analysis of five priority populations for adult basic education and vocational training.

A CHRONOLOGICAL LISTING OF CONTINUING EDUCATION/ADULT BASIC EDUCATION/ GED ACCOUNTABILITY STUDIES

STUDY	STATUS	IMPACT
23. Making the Grade: Keys to Success on the Job in the 90's. (ACT Center for Education and Work)	Completed February, 1995	Identify and define the skills and knowledge employees must have to succeed in the workforce.
24. The Iowa Adult Basic Skills Survey. (CASAS: San Diego, CA)	Completed April 1995	A statewide study to determine the priority competency areas for basic skills and employability skills needed by Iowa's adults based on the CASAS competency system.
A. Assessment of Basic Skills Competencies in Iowa's Employment and Workforce Programs (CASAS: San Diego, CA)	Completed November 1995	The purpose of this study was to provide direction for assessment policy and practice in employability and workforce education and training programs serving youth and adult learners in Iowa. The primary objective was to identify existing assessment instruments that can be used during the initial intake/screening process to efficiently measure the basic skills competencies rated as most essential on the Iowa Adult Basic Skills Survey (IABSS).
B. A Workforce Basic Skills Norming Study of Iowa's JTPA and Promise JOBS Target Populations. (CASAS: San Diego, CA)	In Press	A norming study of Iowa's JTPA and Promise JOBS populations designed to develop a customized appraisal instrument to identify an appropriate range of workplace basic skills.

A CHRONOLOGICAL LISTING OF CONTINUING EDUCATION/ADULT BASIC EDUCATION/ GED ACCOUNTABILITY STUDIES

STUDY	STATUS	IMPACT
25. Synthetic Estimates of Adult Literacy Proficiencies for Regions of Iowa. (Steve Reder: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL): Portland, OR)	Completed June 1995	A report providing synthetic literacy estimates of Iowans aged 16+ by census Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMA's).
26. Iowa CASAS Pilot Project Reports. (IA Dept. of Education)	Completed September 1995	A second year evaluation of CASAS effectiveness in Iowa's Adult Basic Education Programs.
27. Examining the Impact of Programs Funded by the Adult Education Act. (NAEPDC, Wash.: DC)	Completed November 1995	Documents the national impact of Adult Education Act programs from the accountability research conducted over the past 15 years (1980-1995). A total of 30 state and national impact studies were analyzed.
28. National Evaluation of the Section 353 Set-Aside for Teacher Training and Innovation in Adult Education (RMC Research Corporation, Portsmouth, NH)	Completed December 1995	The central purpose of this evaluation is to provide a comprehensive picture of the federal and state systems in place for funding, designing, implementing, and disseminating Section 353-funded activities, and to systematically examine the types of projects funded.

A CHRONOLOGICAL LISTING OF CONTINUING EDUCATION/ADULT BASIC EDUCATION/ GED ACCOUNTABILITY STUDIES

STUDY	STATUS	IMPACT
29. The Role of Community College Adult and Continuing Education in Iowa's Workforce Development Centers. (Iowa Association of Adult and Continuing Education)	Completed January 1996	A position paper to address the role of Iowa's community college continuing education divisions within the infrastructure of Iowa's Workforce Development Centers.
30. Benchmarks for Adult Basic Education Programs in Iowa's Community Colleges. (Iowa's Adult Basic Education Coordinators: Des Moines, IA)	Completed March 1996	This publication identifies Iowa's community colleges adult basic education program benchmarks for base year 1995 with projections for target years 2000 and 2005.
31. Iowa Workforce Training Study: Impact of Iowa's Community College Continuing Education Programs. (National Council on Community Services and Continuing Education, Piedmont Community College; Charlotte, N.C.)	In Press	A study to determine Iowa's workforce training and retraining needs and to determine the impact of present training and retraining programs offered by Iowa's community colleges in conjunction with business and industry.

APPENDIX B

LISTING OF FOCUS AREAS, INDICATORS OF PROGRAM QUALITY,
PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

IOWA'S ADULT BASIC EDUCATION PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

FOCUS AREA	INDICATOR OF PROGRAM QUALITY	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	PERFORMANCE STANDARD
1.0 Educational Gains	1.1 Learners demonstrate progress toward attainment of basic skills.	1.11 Standardized test score gains.	1.11.1 Average range of .5 - 1.0 grade level increase within a range of 20-60 instructional hours.
			1.11.2 Maintain a standard score average range of 49.5-51.5 for GED graduates' performance on the GED examinations.
		1.12 Competency-based test score gains.	1.12.1 To be determined for future program needs.
		1.13 Teacher reports of gains/improvements in basic skills competencies.	1.13.1 Availability of: learner-teacher conferences/anecdotal records/teacher logs.
	1.2 Learners advance in the instructional program or complete program educational requirements that allow them to continue their education or training.	1.14 Alternative assessment methods (e.g., portfolio assessment, student reports of attainment, or improvement in specific employability or life skills).	1.14.1 A variety of nontraditional assessment procedures are utilized to assess student gains.
		1.21 Rate of student advancement to a higher level of skill or competency in the adult education program.	* 1.21.1 Average range of 18-28 percent rate of student advancement.
		1.22 Attainment of a competency certificate.	1.22.1 To be determined for future program needs.

*Indicates this performance standard was used for benchmark development.

IOWA'S ADULT BASIC EDUCATION PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

FOCUS AREA	INDICATOR OF PROGRAM QUALITY	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	PERFORMANCE STANDARD
1.0 Educational Gains	1.3 Literacy rates of Iowa's adult population are regularly assessed in conjunction with the National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS).	1.23 Attainment of a GED or high school diploma.	* 1.23.1 Average range of 10-20 percent of candidates enrolled in GED classes receive GED or adult high school diploma.
			* 1.23.2 Maintain an average range of 85-93 percent pass rate for GED candidates on the GED examinations.
		1.24 Percent of students referred to or entering other education or training programs.	* 1.24.1 Average range of 11-25 percent referred to or entering other education or training programs.
		1.31 Establish benchmarks for Iowa's adult population literacy proficiency levels.	* 1.31.1 Conduct Iowa State Adult Literacy Survey (IASALS) each time National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS) is conducted.

*Indicates this performance standard was used for benchmark development.

IOWA'S ADULT BASIC EDUCATION PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

FOCUS AREA	INDICATOR OF PROGRAM QUALITY	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	PERFORMANCE STANDARD
2.0 Program Planning	2.1 Program has a planning process that is ongoing and participatory, guided by evaluation, and based on a written plan that considers: community demographics, needs, resources, and economic and technological trends, and is implemented to the fullest extent.	2.11 Existence of Iowa's Plan for Adult Basic Education and local program plans that specifies program goals and objectives that reflect community needs and is reviewed and revised when necessary.	* 2.11.1 Availability of resource documents that specify program goals and objectives that reflect community needs.
		2.12 Openness of the program to community input through mechanisms which may include: a participatory planning committee, cooperating organizations, staff meetings, student questionnaires, and documents that have data on community needs.	* 2.12.1 Availability of mechanisms that reflect community input and assist in program planning.
		2.13 Existence of program evaluation which provides input for the program planning process.	* 2.13.1 A variety of general and program-specific resource documents that evaluate the effectiveness of the program planning process is available.
		2.14 Flexibility is maintained between planned program activities and actual activities.	* 2.14.1 Planned and actual program activities reflect the flexibility necessary for effective ABE programming.

*Indicates this performance standard was used for benchmark development.

IOWA'S ADULT BASIC EDUCATION PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

FOCUS AREA	INDICATOR OF PROGRAM QUALITY	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	PERFORMANCE STANDARD
3.0 Curriculum and Instruction	3.1 Program has curriculum and instruction geared to individual students and levels of student needs.	3.11 Use of student assessment information to facilitate the instructional process.	* 3.11.1 Instructional materials assigned correlate with skill levels as determined by appropriate assessment instruments.
		3.12 Existence of student goal-setting process linked to decisions on instructional materials, approaches, and strategies.	3.12.1 Evidence of student-teacher goal setting, where appropriate, through available: student-teacher conferences/anecdotal records/student information forms/teacher logs.
		3.13 Instructional content and strategies address educational needs of individual students.	* 3.13.1 Assigned materials consistent with student goals and skill levels as indicated by the standardized assessment tool and documentation of student goals.

*Indicates this performance standard was used for benchmark development.

IOWA'S ADULT BASIC EDUCATION PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

FOCUS AREA	INDICATOR OF PROGRAM QUALITY	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	PERFORMANCE STANDARD
4.0 Staff Development	4.1 Program has an ongoing staff development process that considers the specific needs of its staff, and offers training in the skills necessary to provide quality instruction.	4.11 Presence of preservice and in-service staff development opportunities that include: a program overview, philosophy and goals of the program, and ongoing topics appropriate to adult learning. 4.12 Existence of process for identifying staff development needs.	* 4.11.1 A variety of professional opportunities are available to coordinators through: face-to-face meetings, state sponsored local, quadrant and professional workshops, coordinator exchanges and special innovative and demonstration projects. 4.11.2 Instructor pre-service is reflected in: program orientation, teaching agreements, job descriptions, job specific state, quadrant and local workshops, a teacher exchange program and district and local workshops. * 4.11.3 Instructor inservice is conducted through: specific state area wide workshops, a teacher exchange program and district and local workshops. 4.12.1 Utilization of coordinator/teacher/recruiter/student workshop planning, implementation and evaluation is evident. 4.12.2 Administration of staff/teacher needs assessment by local coordinators or state consultants is utilized.

*Indicates this performance standard was used for benchmark development.

IOWA'S ADULT BASIC EDUCATION PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

FOCUS AREA	INDICATOR OF PROGRAM QUALITY	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	PERFORMANCE STANDARD
4.0 Staff Development (cont.)		4.13 Effective staff performance as measured by student ratings or observations of staff. 4.14 Percent of staff served through staff development activities.	* 4.13.1 Staff evaluations are conducted by program coordinators. 4.13.2 Students evaluate program. 4.14.1 Average range of 80-90 percent of ABE staff is served through staff development opportunities.

*Indicates this performance standard was used for benchmark development.

IOWA'S ADULT BASIC EDUCATION PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

FOCUS AREA	INDICATOR OF PROGRAM QUALITY	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	PERFORMANCE STANDARD
5.0 Support Services	5.1 Program identifies students' needs for support services and makes services available to students directly or through referral to other educational and service agencies with which the program coordinates.	5.11 Presence of a process for identifying student support service needs.	* 5.11.1 Availability of support services is made known to clients through: coordinator, teacher, outreach worker referrals, and input from Participatory Planning Committees. * 5.11.2 Identification of community resources for student support is an integral part of State and Local Plans.
		5.12 Presence of agreements or linkages between the program and human service providers.	* 5.12.1 Linkages exist with community support agencies such as: Vocational Rehabilitation, Promise Jobs, and JTPA. Linkages may include child care, transportation and other services.
		5.13 Students are referred to various agencies for support services.	* 5.13.1 Human services are available for Adult Basic Education clients.

*Indicates this performance standard was used for benchmark development.

IOWA'S ADULT BASIC EDUCATION PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

FOCUS AREA	INDICATOR OF PROGRAM QUALITY	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	PERFORMANCE STANDARD
6.0 Recruitment	6.1 Program successfully recruits the target populations in the community identified in the Adult Education Act.	6.11 Percentage of target populations enrolled compared with state demographics.	* 6.11.1 The designated district target population as compared to the state target population range of 5-14 percent.
		6.12 Percentage of target populations enrolled compared with state average.	6.12.1 The designated district population as compared to the state enrollment of 8-15 percent.
7.0 Retention	7.1 Students remain in the program until they have met their stated and appropriate educational goals.	7.11 Percent of students meeting personal objectives.	* 7.11.1 Percentages of students meeting personal objectives as compared to the state average range of 8-15 percent.

*Indicates this performance standard was used for benchmark development.